

CLANDESTINE AMERICA



THE WASHINGTON NEWSLETTER OF THE

ASSASSINATION
INFORMATION
BUREAU

Nov-Dec 1979/Jan-Feb 1980

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Vol. 3 No. 3

"This is the Age of Investigation, and every citizen must investigate." — Ed Sanders

INTERVIEW: G. ROBERT BLAKEY

[We thought the extended comments of former HSCA counsel Blakey would be of special interest now that he is no longer constrained by Congressional protocol. Blakey is now residing in Ithaca, New York where he has resumed his duties as a Cornell University law professor and director of their Institute on Organized Crime. One of the most revealing interviews he has given to date came to our attention from DIR Broadcasting of New York City. Their reporter, Chris Stanley, interviewed Blakey this past summer at Cornell. Though three one-minute segments from their conversation were used on radio news broadcasts in August, the remainder of their one hour talk has not been made public until now.]

DIR: When you were originally approached by the committee, what was it that made you accept the assignment, having full knowledge that you were walking into a hornet's nest?

BLAKEY: I knew the Kennedy family. I worked for the Attorney General [Robert Kennedy] in Washington. In fact, I was with him the day the President was killed. And I felt very deeply that no effort should be made for partisan or personal advantage to exploit the President's death, and I felt that the record of some members of the committee and some of the former staffers had indicated that the President's death was being exploited, and I felt it was important that it not be. I also feel very deeply about Congressional government. If Congress can't run this kind of very sophisticated investigation with dignity and a certain grace, it says something about representative democracy. And I felt those two values were terribly important and ought to be reflected in the investigation. Obviously too, I thought it important that the truth be known, whichever it was. I had no special interest in the assassination of either the President or Dr. King. I had not been involved in reading the critical literature or involved in any of the political controversies. I read the Warren Commission's *Report* in '64, felt it was a workman-like product, and was generally satisfied with it. So I really came with a fresh mind. Literally, I did not know what the issues were. And I had no particular desire for it to come out one way or the other.

DIR: Up to the point where you entered the investigation, it seemed like they were having a great deal of difficulty. There was an awful lot of infighting going on. I understand that some of the members of the committee had specifically gone to the House leadership and asked that Rep. Gonzalez not be made chairman of the committee, and that there was originally a feeling of a lack of seriousness in appointing Rep. Downing chairman of the committee because he was a lame duck Congressman, and they were going to have to change and start again in the middle of it, and this led to a real disorganized feeling

about it right at the beginning. Did you discern that feeling, and when they turned to you did you see a chance to calm that down?

BLAKEY: No. My knowledge of what went on before I got there is obviously limited. But I would tell you this, what was followed in the appointment of Congressmen Downing and Gonzalez was not a plan, but seniority. They were the people who were supposed to be appointed. And it would have been indicative of planning and an effort to manipulate the investigation if they were not appointed. Ultimately, of course, Congressman Gonzalez and the former Counsel Sprague resigned, for reasons that seemed to me to be apparent to anybody who read the newspapers. They couldn't get along, and the committee was not getting down to the serious business of investigating the President's and Dr. King's deaths and the other issues before it. And I'm really not terribly interested in what happened before me. What happened after me is something I know a lot about, and I'd rather talk about that.

DIR: You have been criticized for keeping the scope of the investigation narrow. It is charged that right from the outset you decided to go into only certain areas, and that time and money didn't allow you the leeway of covering the whole gamut of questions that have been raised over the years. How do you respond to the criticism that you didn't do it in depth, but put a lot of effort into only some limited areas?

BLAKEY: That kind of criticism, and I don't attribute it to you personally, is really mindless. This committee had a two-year life. There was virtually no chance that it would be extended. If we came up with nothing, it surely wouldn't be extended. If we came up with something, ironically it wouldn't be extended either. It would be referred to the Department of Justice.

DIR: Why was that so? Why was there the assumption that it wouldn't be extended, even if you were on the verge of finding the actual conspirators?

BLAKEY: The committee occupied a very interesting position. It was a Congressional committee pursuing legitimate Congressional purposes. It was not an executive agency conducting a murder investigation. To the degree that it began looking like a murder investigation, it would have been unconstitutional. It would have been, on the legislative side of the equation, just as unconstitutional as some of the things the Nixon administration did in the '70's. And just as objectionable, for precisely the same reasons. We do have a government that's supposed to stay within proper constitutional boundaries.

So the committee had a clear constitutional responsibility to act like a congressional committee. And if we hadn't, "come up with anything," we had no duty or right to go on. If we had come up with evidence pointing towards individual responsibility, we had a right and a duty to turn it over to the executive authority to pursue it in a criminal context. We only had a two year life, and that's terribly



important to put in context, in light of the first part of your question. We did not have unlimited time, and we did not have unlimited money, and we, and anybody else who gets into this, lacked the ability to answer any question you can think up. There are a lot of questions that can be asked that can't be answered—just inherently. Maybe the person who knows the answer to it is dead. And short of getting into ESP or something, you can't get to those kind of people.

So what we had to do was select from among all of the available questions those which we felt within a year we could come up with useful information on. And what we tried to do was select a representative sample of all of the questions, sort of like a U-boat commander laying down a series of torpedoes trying to take out an enemy destroyer. Some of them will go astray and won't get you anything. One or two will hit. If we took that representative sample of questions in the Kennedy case, and answered every single one of them, in a fashion consistent to the Warren Commission, it's probably true that our committee's investigation would have laid this particular controversy to rest, permanently. The risk the Congress and the country took was that one or more of those questions would not be answered in a fashion consistent with the Warren Commission, and then, ironically, because our life could not continue, that question would stand with an answer that was itself a question and that would require further investigation. And that's precisely where we are now.

DIR: Then you went into this knowing there was a possibility you were going to ignore areas that might...

BLAKEY: No, I think that's wrong. I think we looked into, at least in some degree, every area in the case. No area was fundamentally not examined. That is not to say the investigation was so comprehensive that every question was examined and thoroughly explored. Some of them were superficially looked at. But major questions were taken up in every single area. And the answers to those questions, if they came in consistent with the Warren Commission would probably have laid it to rest. If they came in inconsistent with the Warren Commission, we were put in a situation where further pursuit of those questions would have to be done by someone else. That's what happened to us.

It's more like a scientist looking for the cure to a disease, and having only general ideas, he begins with a series of trial and error experiments. And he can work those experiments almost without end. But if he has only a limited series of possible solutions, he only has to take a representative sample of trial and error examinations, until he finds the area he should spend his time in. And that's what the committee did. For example, the scientific work was an effort to try and look at the assassination with the benefit of new science and technology. The hard data had not changed. It had not grown old. The photographs are just as good today as they were in 1964. That's an area where the trail was not cold. And where over time the ability to interpret them improved. The same thing applies to the tape that the committee ultimately rediscovered and subjected to more modern, scientific technology. We got out of it sound that was not heard in 1964. That's where we had an opportunity to make a new contribution. And we did.

And then we looked in areas that were not examined in '64. For example, we looked directly at the CIA. We looked directly at the FBI. And obviously the Warren Commission didn't do that. We looked at events that occurred after '64. And obviously the Warren Commission couldn't do that. So those things were terribly important and useful.

DIR: When this committee was formed, a lot of the public looked to it for the solution. It was regarded, at least in the public perception, as being the kind of murder investigation that you said is unconstitutional for it to be. Do you think it was adequately explained to the public from the outset that this was not going to be what they were looking for in terms of a resolution of all the loose ends and questions

that were being asked?

BLAKEY: No. And I think the media has to carry a major burden of that responsibility. Even in the coverage of the *Final Report*, it was almost as if we had one question, "Was there a conspiracy?" And, "Did you prove beyond a reasonable doubt the identity of the man or woman behind the grassy knoll fence?" And that's unfortunate. The committee made every single effort conceivably possible to explain in all of its hearings exactly what it was, and exactly what it was doing. I think one reason the committee, in its early life, got into the trouble that it did was because it lost its sense of perspective. It forgot that it was a congressional committee that should be acting in a constitutional fashion. The publicity that was associated with it and the effort to turn it into a kind of public inquisition of the murders led to its demise. And when Congressman Stokes became chairman, and they asked me to come down and handle the investigation, its ability to move the investigation toward finding out the truth as far as it did is directly attributable to the fact that it did not act like a public prosecutor, but in fact like a disciplined, professional Congressional committee.

DIR: Originally there was a feeling it was going to go way beyond that when your predecessor, Richard Sprague, the Philadelphia prosecutor, was taken on as the first chief counsel. He made a number of public statements that he was looking for a staff of some 200 people, that he was looking for a great deal of money to back the investigation, and that the time limit on the investigation was going to be open ended. This seemed to provoke a reaction which got Mr. Sprague slapped down and ultimately fired. Yet all Sprague seemed to be demonstrating was a willingness to conduct the most thorough investigation possible by whatever means were available to him. Why was there a negative reaction to that?

BLAKEY: The point is that Sprague did not know what he was doing when he was down in Washington. He did not know that he was running a Congressional investigation. He thought he could run a Congressional committee like he ran the Philadelphia prosecutor's office, and that he could ride roughshod over everybody in sight—including the Congress and all of the executive agencies. When I got down there in June, 1977, I found a fairly demoralized, disorganized office. They had not read a single classified file. In fact, the money that was appropriated to the committee for the first six to eight months, which was largely the money obtained by Sprague, was wasted. It was about a half million dollars.

If one is going to drive a very sophisticated car, he has to understand that car. If somebody is going to listen to good rock music on good equipment, he's got to know that equipment. And the equipment available to the "prosecutor" to find out the truth in this case, was not a state grand jury, not a federal grand jury, but a Congressional committee. That equipment, or that car, has to be played in the context within which it will respond to you. It's just that simple. And Sprague was trying to run a Congressional committee like he would run a state grand jury. He was a bull in a china shop. He was so successful that he got himself fired in about three months. He talked a good game, but when it came time to produce something he didn't.

DIR: Wasn't there a feeling though, that Sprague's approach was what the public wanted? Wasn't that what the outcry was for, that kind of bull in a china shop investigation that might do an end run around the bureaucracy which, to the public's mind, had been blocking the release of information?

BLAKEY: What the public wants, and what the public can get are two different things. And it is a corrupt and dishonest politician who simply promises the public anything they want. The notion that somehow people outside of Washington can come into Washington



and do great and noble things in Washington without understanding the place, is just nonsense. And it ought to be called nonsense by honest people. Mr. Sprague was eaten alive, by the Congress and the bureaucracy, simply because of the way he tried to run it. In point of fact, the committee ultimately obtained from the CIA every single document that it wanted. No limitations were put on it. We got deeper and wider in the agency files than any other Congressional committee in the history of Congress—bar none, including the Church Committee and the Intelligence Committees in the House and Senate. And the same thing is true with the FBI files. And we did it because, I think, of the responsibility of the committee and the quiet and appropriately professional way in which the committee was run. It's true we didn't get everything we wanted. For example, in Mexico we did not get access to some of the people we wanted. But that, I don't think, is attributable to the CIA. It's just that we don't have unlimited power in Mexico or Canada, because they are sovereign nations. So in that sense we didn't get what we wanted, but in this country we got what we wanted from everybody. We did it because we were not conducting a circus. We were conducting a serious investigation.

DIR: My understanding is that as soon as you got to the committee the priorities were laid down, the people on the staff were immediately sworn to secrecy, and your first press conference had an announcement that there would be no more press conferences. Could you describe how you conducted the investigation once you got down there?

BLAKEY: Well, I think that is precisely the point, you don't start telling everybody everything at the *beginning* of the investigation. You tell everybody everything at the *end* of the investigation. And there has to be a period of quiet work before you have anything to say. A talking prosecutor is not a working prosecutor. And the same thing is true of a Congressional committee. The ones that make the loudest noise, very often have the least to say. If we wanted to conduct a serious and quiet investigation for the course of twelve months or so before the public hearings, that's exactly what we had to do. And if you wanted to write the kind of report we wrote and hold the kind of public hearings that this committee did, some 38 days of public hearings, you had to do it that way. Remember, the Warren Commission had only one day of public hearings, the Rockefeller Commission had none, the Church Committee had none. This committee, in the end, spoke more to the American people than any other body ever looking at either of these cases. To say that we should have been speaking the whole time, is to say that we wouldn't have had time to acquire anything to speak about.

DIR: I understand also that you were very reluctant to let anyone on the investigative staff talk to the outside critics of the Warren Commission. Why weren't the critics allowed access to the staff?

BLAKEY: That's not true. One of the first things I did on the Kennedy side was to conduct a two day conference in Washington where the major critics were brought to Washington, at government expense, and were interviewed in the presence of the staff, where the staff could ask any question they wanted to and the critics could say *anything* they in fact wanted to.

DIR: Was that a pretty bouncy session?

BLAKEY: Yes. And we had a stenographic transcript made. The conference was on September 17th and 18th, 1977 at the beginning of the investigation. So in fact we did immediately get access to them.

Most of the critics have written most of what they have to say. All of that literature was critically analyzed by the staff, and during the entire course of the investigation a number of critics were in constant contact with the staff. We talked to Paul Hoch and Mary Ferrell

repeatedly. And I could go on. What we didn't permit the critics to do was conduct the investigation with us side by side. We did not exchange information with the critics on a day to day basis. And it's perfectly obvious why we didn't. None of the critics have top-secret security clearances. We could not take the critics into our confidence, but we certainly accepted from them the information that they had. The notion that we didn't is false.

DIR: If this was not a prosecutorial murder investigation, where does the public go to get that kind of satisfaction? According to your findings, the FBI and CIA were deficient in their original investigation of both murders. The FBI is the unit to which this information is now being turned over to see if there should be follow up on it, yet they were the reason we had to ask for this new investigation in the first place. But you say that the feeling that someone outside of government can conduct this kind of investigation is misplaced—that it has to be done within the Washington context. This is really confusing to the public. How can they get satisfaction out of this entire process?

BLAKEY: The first thing that you did there, and it's very common, is to engage in anthropomorphism. What you did was to personify the FBI and the CIA, and you assumed that they are the same today as they were 15 to 20 years ago. The answer is they are not. The FBI as a living and breathing and thinking creature doesn't exist. The FBI is a collection of individuals. Now it is true that over time that collection sometimes reacts as if it had a personality, but it doesn't really. And it is not the same creature today as it was 20 years ago.

DIR: But under J. Edgar Hoover it actually did have a personality and a single man really did guide what was going on.

BLAKEY: Nobody that knows the Bureau really believes that. Hoover did indeed have a personal impact on it and how it operated, but even when he was there there was a kind of counterpersonality to him. The Bureau did a lot of things that he didn't know about. Look, my point is that he's not there now. The man who is currently there, Bill Webster, is a man of enormous personal integrity and intelligence. In that Bureau today, I think the average age of the agents is 35. It's been 15 years since the Kennedy investigation. If the average age is 35, those people were 20 when this murder went down. It's *not* the same place that it was. And consequently I think. . . .

DIR: It's to be trusted?

BLAKEY: No more than any other government agency is to be trusted. I don't trust the media and I don't trust government agencies, to the point where I'm in blind faith with them. One of the reasons we have the kind of government we do—with a court, and the Congress, and the executive agency—is constitutionally the founding fathers didn't trust people with the exercise of power. And I don't think we should do it today either. One of the healthy reasons this committee could conduct the investigation is as a check on executive power. On the other hand, the kind of criminal investigation that produces something constitutionally belongs in the Department of Justice. And if you take it out of the Department and put it in a court or the Congress, you will get a *bad* result. You will get an unconstitutional result. And you will not want that. You don't want the kind of government that abuses power. If in fact the executive, meaning in this case the Department of Justice, doesn't pursue this investigation, the solution is to get a new head for the Department, not to take it and put it someplace else. That will just cause two problems, instead of one. And I don't see any firm indication that they won't pursue it.

Let's be frank again. This case is now 17 years old. While I believe there are things that can be done, in a criminal justice context to move this towards trial, I am not necessarily suggesting to you that in 6 or 8 months, given a grand jury and 25 FBI agents, I could bring an



indictment that would secure a conviction. I think I could come close to it. I also believe I could tell you at the end of that time whether anything else could be done. It may well be that what had happened in the past, has had a consequence that cannot now be remedied. This permanently unsolved.

DIR: That's a very bitter pill for the American people to swallow. Don't you feel that this should be pursued until it's exhausted, until we are positive that all of the participants are either dead or brought to justice?

BLAKEY: Yes. I have no problem with that. I think this case should be pursued until there is nothing else to do. But, look, if you had wanted comfort, maybe you should have hired a psychiatrist or priest to conduct the investigation. If what you wanted was the truth, what you should have done is what you did. You hired a law professor, who happens to have tenure, and therefore doesn't owe anybody anything. I was very clear with the committee. I went down there and I said, "Hey, look, I will conduct the investigation, but up front you are going to have to be satisfied with three possible answers: guilty, not guilty, or a scotch verdict, which is not proven. Because you want the truth in this case, it does not follow that you will get it. And what you are entitled to is to be told the truth. And what the truth may well be is, 'I don't know and it is not knowable.'" "The beginning of sanity is the ability to distinguish between those kinds of things that you can have and you can't have, and to recognize that there are some questions in life that can't be answered, and to learn to live with them. Now, look, I'm not telling you that this case doesn't have a lot in it that still can be done, it does. And it should be done, but maybe the consequences of the mistakes of 1964 have already reached us. It may be that it is too late to do a lot more. But what this country is entitled to from the Department of Justice is the frank statement, "We didn't do it right in 1964. And the consequence of not doing it right in 1964 is that the case is officially unsolved. And we have now done in 1979 everything that we can and there is nothing else to do."

DIR: What is the line that is drawn now from the results of the committee to further investigation by the Department of Justice? Is this something that President Carter is going to have to order before the Department will act on this? Or can they just pick up the investigation on their own?

BLAKEY: No, the Department of Justice—the Attorney General and the FBI—are perfectly free to continue this investigation and have been. There was an agreement between the Department and the Congress that they would not pursue the case during the course of the committee's life. Now that the committee is no longer in existence, they are perfectly free to do so. What the committee recommended to them, in the Kennedy case, is that they redo the acoustics, if only for the sake of history, so that one agency of government would not speak on this issue alone—so that the executive department would also respond in some way to the question, how many shots in Dealey Plaza? Two, three, or four? And four meaning a conspiracy. They must do that, and there is no reason why they can't do that. And I am perfectly confident as to what the answer is.

Second, the committee was very explicit; we didn't say go out and indict somebody. What we said was, study our record and then come back and tell us whether you think that there are concrete things that can be done in this investigation. There is no statute of limitations on murder. The areas the committee pointed to in the King case, St. Louis, and in the Kennedy case, New Orleans, have within them today living people who could have been involved in the assassinations of King and Kennedy. Those people should be vigorously investigated by all constitutional means. If in fact they cannot discover the truth, that's a fact of life, and we have to live with it. The only thing we

shouldn't have to be expected to live with is a lack of a desire and effort to pursue it. If they walk away and say, "The Congress has done it, let the Congress live with it," then we have a compounding of the tragedy of 1964 and 1968. That's what we don't have to live with.

DIR: Having put in so much time on these cases, how does it make you feel, that so far nothing has come of it?

BLAKEY: Frustrated. Cynical. Disappointed in government.

DIR: Do you expect anything is going to happen? Are you talking to people and rattling doors and saying, "Look, you guys, pick it up before it dies again?"

BLAKEY: I am not going to make this a one man crusade. I gave it two years of my life, I did what I could within the context of the time and the ability that was available to me, and I'm going to go on with my life. I would say that to see how poorly this was done in 1964 and '68 has been the single most soul shattering experience that I've ever had. And I would be deeply disappointed in the agencies of my government, and in the people who currently run them, if these cases were simply allowed to die.

On the other hand, I know Ben Civiletti, the Attorney General. And I know Bill Webster, the Director of the FBI. They are both men of high integrity and great ability. I don't think they will let it die. If they do so, it will be because they take inadequate advice from subordinates and don't spend sufficient time themselves on the issues to resolve them. And I don't think they will do that.

DIR: The committee came out with findings that organized crime as a whole was not really involved in this, that it was not some round table discussion by the heads of the families saying that they had to get rid of John Kennedy because they had to get back into Cuba. But is it your summary conclusion that it's possible individual members and individual heads of families, namely Trafficante and Marcello, and also members of Cuban exile groups, probably did have some kind of involvement in it?

BLAKEY: The committee's finding was that the National Syndicate of Organized Crime, meaning the Commission, didn't do it. And I think that's pretty firmly rooted. The FBI conducted a surveillance program that listened to most of the personal conversations of the key people during the relevant period of time, and it would have shown up in those conversations. They were conversations replete with threats against the Kennedys and discussions of other murders, or bribery, or extortion, the vilest sort of crime. There is no doubt in my mind that the coverage was adequate and it would have picked up an active plot to kill the President. It didn't. But the umbrella was not comprehensive. It did not cover all of the major areas of the country. It did not, for example, cover Florida, and it did not cover New Orleans. So it's not possible to say that the major figures in Florida and New Orleans didn't conspire against the President. And that's precisely what the committee found.

Look, a man doesn't decide to kill the President of the United States without talking about it beforehand. He talks about it in a general way, then he makes a decision to do it, and then he plots it. If it had been any kind of a conspiracy at all, there would have been conversations. And the surveillance would have picked it up—had they been in place. It was not in place in Dallas, it was not in place in New Orleans. And that's ironically where Lee Harvey Oswald was. So the conversations between the higher level people, the middle level people and Oswald were not picked up.

In light of the web of circumstantial evidence involving Oswald's activities in Dallas and New Orleans and his connections to organized crime figures in New Orleans, and Jack Ruby's activities in Dallas, it



is my judgment, not the committee's, my judgment, that the Mob did it.

The first requirement of a good theory is that it fit the facts. Not some of the facts, but all of the facts. And when you sit down, as I did, for two years and look at everything, with nothing held back, and you try to ask yourself what makes sense out of this more than anything else, there's only *one* theory that makes sense out of it, and that's that the Mob did it.

DIR: What does it encompass? Does it play through New Orleans, to Florida, to Dallas, to Cuba?

BLAKEY: I don't know that you can say Cuba, meaning the Castro regime. Whatever else you may want to say about Castro, he is not insane. And he is not reckless. He stands alone today. All of the other major figures of the sixties are dead or overthrown. He hasn't survived as long as he has by being reckless or by being insane. And as he put it when we talked to him in Havana, it would have been an insanity for him to try to kill the President of the United States. It was too much of a risk. Think about the second level of it. Who would he have gotten as the successor? Lyndon Johnson, who surely could not have been from Castro's perspective more attractive. I don't think Castro or his regime had anything to do with the President's death directly. Cuba is small country, and at that time, all the major figures in it were personally related to Castro in the sense that they were all in the mountains together. So I don't think he had a rogue elephant in his DGI [Cuban intelligence] that would have done it on their own. The evidence is just not there.

So when you ask, "did it link into Cuba?", no, I don't think it linked into the Castro people. But when you look at the figures in New Orleans and in Dallas, some of them are Cuban ex-patriots, the right mix of people is there. Lee Harvey Oswald had associations with those people. And the two hard facts that you just cannot explain are: two people shot at the President—that's a scientific fact, and Jack Ruby killed Lee Harvey Oswald. I saw it on TV. Any effort to explain that assassination has to include the fact of two shooters and has to include the fact that Lee Harvey Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby. Those are facts. They are not debatable anymore. Everything else is theory. And I am sorry if this goes down hard or disturbs people who had made up their minds that something else was true. I have looked at everything else I could find, in addition to those two hard facts. And they all point in one direction. Ruby probably killed Oswald as a result of a desire to silence him. And Lee Harvey Oswald killed the President for motivation that is known only to Lee Harvey Oswald. But he acted in behalf of a desire on the part of the Mob, or at least elements of it, to get the Kennedy administration off their back. It's that simple.

DIR: Based on the evidence you have looked at, was this a willful association on Oswald's part, or was the Mob aware of Oswald's intentions and let it happen? Or did they facilitate it by perhaps backing him up with another shooter in case he blew it?

BLAKEY: I think they used him—manipulated him. Look, I have no doubt that Lee Harvey Oswald killed the President. Oswald did it, it's an open and shut case. I should be a prosecutor with evidence like that in every case. I'd have a 100% batting average. The same thing is true of James Earl Ray. He killed King. I should have evidence like that in every case as a prosecutor! It's clear and open and shut.

DIR: People have gone to jail on far less evidence, you're saying, than you have in both of these instances?

BLAKEY: People are in jail, and legitimately in jail, on a lot less evidence for the shooter cases. My judgment is based on twenty years of work in the area of organized crime, of two years of reading the files and talking to the witnesses and analyzing and arguing with

it. And I must say I resisted it for the longest period of time, for professional reasons. It seemed to me that the evidence had to convince me. And I personally treated the staff with the utmost skepticism as this kind of evidence began to develop. I questioned it and I'm sure they all think I'm some kind of a nut. I never believed anything they said.

DIR: You took a basic "prove it to me" attitude?

BLAKEY: For everything. And I think I had to go through that kind of mental process to avoid jumping at a conclusion, and frankly I did not ultimately come to the personal judgment that the Mob did it until I felt the impact of working on the final report and editing it and all of the staff papers. It was the one time, over a course of two or three months, that I knew everything simultaneously. I was forced to think about everything at the same time, because it was all laid out in front of me, and I was trying to see what coherence it had. And there it was. Whereas on a day to day basis, I could not think about parts, because I had to think about other parts. The process of looking at it at the end brought me around to the view that some of the staff members always had. And that some other staff members think is off the wall. But this is my personal opinion, not the committee's opinion.

DIR: What a wonderful opportunity this is to go after the Mob in a way that they have never been gone before. My feeling is that the government has been pussyfooting around in trying to break organized crime since the Robert Kennedy days. And now if there is some feeling that the Mob was responsible for the assassination of the President, couldn't public support be garnered for a whole hog investigation?

BLAKEY: Well, even if the Mob didn't kill the President, I think that, to the degree that they are engaging in criminal conduct in this country, and they are, and that criminal sanctions are not significantly being brought to bear on them, and they are not, on either the federal, state, or local level, I'm perfectly willing to suggest that they, just like everybody else, ought to be subject to the general processes of the law. Murder by a Mafia figure ought to be investigated just like murder by the husband of a wife or the wife of a husband or a bank robber on the way out as he shoots a guard. Independent of their involvement, if any, in the assassination of the President, we ought to make an honest effort to make the rule of law applicable to organized crime, or to white collar crime, or to street crime.

DIR: But with something like this and it's ability to arouse public passions to really get behind an investigation, don't you think this could give the Justice Department the kind of support it needs to go after them, to break the feeling that this is just a part of life in America?

BLAKEY: I don't want a witchhunt. I don't want to have a mob with torches climbing the hills to get to Frankenstein, even if the Frankenstein was the Mob. Let me be blunt about it, I think that if we investigate them and arrest them and try them, they are entitled to due process. If you don't give due process to your enemies or to people who are in your society, but outside of it, what is due process for? This is a nation of minorities. There isn't a majority on any issue in this country. We are all minority people. The civil liberties that the Mob possesses are also the ones that I possess. And while this may sound contradictory to some people, I think they are entitled to a deliberate, rational, dispassionate investigation into their responsibility. I wouldn't want to whip the public up into an outcry against them. The Justice Department doesn't need additional support. They have the people in place. They have the tools. The only thing they have to do is decide that that's a good thing to do and they can do it.

DIR: The report clears government agencies in any involvement in



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this. Many people harbor suspicions that the CIA was involved. Would it be consistent with your thinking that perhaps the Mob was trying to set up the CIA? That Oswald's alleged appearance in Mexico City was a Mob decoy to make it look as though there was involvement by the CIA?

BLAKEY: There's a principle in philosophy called "Ockham's Razor," which basically means, prefer a simple solution to a complex one. "Don't unnecessarily multiply artificial beings," is the philosophical statement of it. I'm not one that posits very complicated conspiracy theories. Yes, I think in fact the use of Oswald, by organized crime, was an effort to divert attention from themselves—not necessarily to implicate another. Oswald is a leftist, a Marxist. That's a fact. Look at his life. He is not a crypto-intelligence officer. The evidence is just not there. The use of someone like that by the Mob is perfect from their perspective. Who would think that the Mob would use a Marxist to take out the President? For 15 years we didn't, which is a credit to them. We were worried about whether Cuba did it. We were worried about whether the CIA did it. We were worried about whether the FBI did it. And the Mob must have been thinking to themselves, "good." Well, I think in fact they used Oswald, not so much to involve someone else, as not to involve themselves.

DIR: Is there any openness in your mind that the CIA was aware of Oswald's intentions because of the connections they had up to that point with organized crime? And although the CIA had no overt involvement in the assassination, they allowed it to happen?

BLAKEY: There you've gone and done it again. You have personified the CIA. You made it a person. And you gave it knowledge and you gave it power.

DIR: I'm talking about the few people who may have had access to individual pieces of information. Not hundreds and hundreds of agents.

BLAKEY: One of the things we found out about the CIA, that I'm sure they don't want to get out, but it's the truth, is that they are neither omniscient nor omnipotent. One of the reasons their files are classified is to hide, not only from the Americans, but the Russians, how little they know. They are not sitting down there in Langley knowing about everything and pulling strings everywhere. The notion that they would have known about the Mafia connections to Oswald and that they would somehow have allowed it to happen makes them almost like God—permitting evil in the world. I'm sorry, that's not the way they really are. They have only snippets of information about a few things.

DIR: They had lots of specific information from the time of the Bay of Pigs and after about the relationship between the Cuban exiles and the Mafia and the Castro regime?

BLAKEY: You've got it at the level of abstraction now which is far over Lee Harvey Oswald's head. I'm saying, sure they knew *something* about the Mafia, but if they'd known a lot about the Mafia they wouldn't have gotten in bed with them. That was an indication of how little they knew; of how naive they were to have engaged in an institutional conspiracy, where the CIA formally works with the Mafia, as opposed to an individual agent dealing with an individual Mafia member. If they had been omniscient or omnipotent, they wouldn't have gotten in bed. That's an example of them being grossly naive.

Coming back to the narrow question, I don't think they knew enough about Oswald to know he was thinking about killing the President. The truth is they misidentified him in Mexico. They came up with the wrong picture of him. That's a fact. Far from knowing too much, they didn't know enough. And what they did have was not circulated correctly within the government. It's remarkable that in the

end they knew as much about him as they did. But it wasn't coordinated terribly well within the agency and it was not circulated outside the agency very efficiently. I just don't think the evidence is there that indicates government complicity, either by the FBI or the CIA in the President's death through Lee Harvey Oswald. It's just not there. It's not that we didn't look. In fact in retrospect, we spent too much time looking at the CIA and not enough time looking at the Mob. Of course that's hindsight, and I suspect I'm as firmly convinced of non-CIA complicity as I am because we spent the time looking at them. If we hadn't spent the time, I wouldn't be as firmly convinced.

DIR: Do you think Jim Garrison had something going in his New Orleans investigation? And that his discrediting really blocked up an area that might well have led to a great deal more information in the area you are talking about?

BLAKEY: Jim Garrison did more harm to this case than any other single person. He in fact had evidence in his case that if pursued quietly and professionally, in a competent way, may well have broken it. But he didn't do that. And in not doing it, he became the center of attention and not the evidence. And he discredited, by the way he conducted that investigation, the theory he was pursuing and the evidence he had. And he presented a major obstacle to us in our effort to try and analyze that evidence, because it was tainted by the way in which much of it was gathered—tainted in people's minds. So I say, in a sense, more than any other single person, he did more to harm this investigation, not what he did or the kinds of evidence he developed, but by the way he conducted it. When he was looking into David Ferrie and looking for Ferrie's associations with Oswald, he was apparently pursuing good evidence. Unfortunately, that evidence was later directed away from its natural subjects and against Clay Shaw and a group of homosexuals in the French Quarter. And that investigation was an abomination.

DIR: Had Professors Weiss and Aschkenasy not presented the acoustic evidence on December 29th of last year, would you have the same judgment you have now about the Mob's involvement?

BLAKEY: I can't really answer that question. They did present the evidence. I could go through the mental processes of a judge and say, "If this evidence was inadmissible, how would you come out?" I could do that, but it's extremely difficult, and I'm never sure whether judges who say they do that are able to in fact do that. It's a fact that there were two shooters, and that fact causes you to reexamine everything else in the case.

DIR: Were you convinced by the time the acoustics evidence went public that there were four shots?

BLAKEY: I knew there were four shots in July, 1978.

DIR: When you recreated the shooting down in Dallas?

BLAKEY: No. We found the tape and we took it to Dr. Barger. And his initial reaction was that there was nothing on it. And I said, "Well, I appreciate that, but we've got to go the last mile. Let's set up a series of scientific experiments to prove that there's nothing on it. I'm perfectly willing to phrase the question either way, because the answer will be yes or no, either way." And he and I agreed the way we should do it was to prove there was nothing on the tape. He couldn't do it. And when he couldn't do it, that's the beginning of what the staff began to call "my problem."

DIR: That was known as "Blakey's problem."

BLAKEY: Yes. That meant we then had to fundamentally reconsider everything—all of the evidence that had come before. We now had what looked like hard scientific evidence of two shooters. And every-



thing we did thereafter was designed to pursue that on the hypothesis it was wrong, because the only way we could be sure it was right, was if we did everything possible to prove it was wrong. If we started out assuming it was right and tried to prove it was right, the process would not be as reliable as if you do it the other way. In my heart I knew it was right. What I did in my mind was try to disprove it.

A lot of people have said that the investigation was conducted in secret. That's not true. At least that phase of it, was literally conducted in public [the July-December acoustics]. The public saw all of the preliminary judgments coming up, and they saw the way they were phrased as preliminary judgments. Barger said, "As I look at it today"—meaning in September—"I can't give you a better mathematical estimate than 50-50." That was not his final judgment. His final judgment came after we brought in the outside consultants.

We were using Weiss and Aschkenasy to give us a second opinion on Barger, and we were using Barger to give us a second opinion on them. Both of them as groups are superb acoustical experts. They are the best people in the nation. Period. Barger has the finest single firm in the country. Weiss was on the Sirica panel. And we used Weiss as a kind of second opinion surgeon, before we let Barger do the operation. And then when we brought him in to give us a second opinion on Barger's first opinion, he conceived of a mathematical extension of it. Barger looked at this mathematical extension and agreed and said it was superb. And what you got in November, and then publically in December, was the final judgment—95%+ that a noise as loud as a gun came from the grassy knoll. That's a scientific fact. If you have a high school understanding of physics, if you study the materials, and they are now publically available in the acoustics report from GPO, unless you are biased when you come into it, that is, you want to believe something other than what your senses and intelligence tell you is there, there is only one conclusion—95%+. Those people who study it and don't agree with it are either dumb or biased.

DIR: There has been criticism that shots were only fired in the reenactment from two locations on Dealey Plaza, rather than other locations as well. Do you think there is a possibility of more than two gunmen? Three or four or more?

BLAKEY: I think what you have to do is study the tape again. This is an example where we didn't have unlimited time and we didn't have unlimited money. And when we went down there we wanted to prove there were no shots on the tape, for the purposes of the hypothesis. And what we did was take the two places where most of the evidence indicated there were shots: the Depository and the grassy knoll. If we had found no shots in either of those places, that would have settled it—the tape didn't work. There was nothing on it. Having found shots in those two places, we brought back the evidence on those two places. If there are other places on the tape that could indicate shots, then it would be appropriate for the FBI or the National Science Foundation or anybody else who pursues it, to do in Dealey Plaza what we did in reference to those other places. Barger and Weiss and Aschkenasy are clear. They said there were four shots on that tape. At least four. They don't say there are *not* five and *not* six. They simply didn't study that question. What you do is you take your problems as they are. And normally each day's problems are sufficient unto that day. It was enough for us to try to figure out whether there were four shots on that tape.

DIR: Having found four, do you think it would be worthwhile for some group to go back to Dealey Plaza again and look for other possible shots, to see whether or not somebody else perhaps was up in the window with Oswald as the Bronson film indicates a possibility of? Is that something you cannot deny a possibility of?

BLAKEY: A good professor won't close out any possibility. But there just isn't the aural testimony, the earwitness testimony in Dealey Plaza, to justify shots from all over the place. It's true that people there said they heard shots from other places. But a majority of people in Dealey Plaza didn't hear shots from the Depository. It is in fact an echo chamber, where shots can be heard from several different directions. It is true that in the several days after November 22nd people read newspapers and talked to one another, and their real perceptions were obviously changed by conversations and what was in the media.

My point is that I don't know that it would be necessary to go back to Dealey Plaza to do the analysis of the tape to determine whether there are other shots there. What required the test in Dallas was the verification of the location of the microphone. That's been done now. The kind of mathematical work Weiss and Aschkenasy were able to do for shot number three, based on Barger's August test, can be done for the other three shots, and to the degree that there are impulse patterns on the tape—any impulse patterns on the tape—it would be possible to verify whether they are shots using the Weiss and Aschkenasy method. If you have a possible shooter location, you now know the microphone location, you know the echo characteristics of the Plaza, you can test those other locations. Weiss and Aschkenasy would have tested every single location in Dealey Plaza had they had time. Between September and December they didn't have time to do the kind of trial and error mathematical calculations for all four shots that they did for the crucial one in this context—the grassy knoll shot. And the committee recommended that the Department of Justice do the rest of the shots, and look to see if there are other shots on there or not. There are no artificial time limitations now on the Department. It doesn't have a two year life like a Congressional committee. If it takes them six months to a year to analyze every impulse pattern on that tape, they ought to take the time and do it.

DIR: Is any of that going on now to the best of your knowledge? Has the process of investigation by the Justice Department begun?

BLAKEY: I think it's fair to say the FBI has been aware of what the recommendations are since last December and they have also been aware of the nature of our investigation for some time, and I'm sure that staffing memos have been done within the Bureau thinking about what ought to be done if a policy decision is made at the highest levels to do it. They haven't been sitting on their hands for six months. Have they in fact contracted for outside acoustical experts? Have the acoustical people within the Bureau begun to do it? I think that those questions are best addressed to them.

DIR: Does the Justice Department have to analyze the tape first or can there be independent work done investigating organized crime at the same time?

BLAKEY: There's no evidence of a scientific character in the Plaza that indicates the identity of the person behind the grassy knoll fence. That there were two shooters, and thus a conspiracy, is a scientifically based fact. But this does not include any factor that points at the Mob. So you could conclude, I don't think very easily, that Jack Ruby killed Oswald as a single assassin acting on his own, and that the nature of the conspiracy was not Mob related. When you add a known fact to the scenario, you get a kind of hard core of facts. Oswald did it; Oswald had help; Oswald was killed by Ruby. It's possible to emphasize the first two facts and not have a "Mob did it" scenario. It's that Ruby did it that brings the Mob in. Look, it's not just these three facts, these are the three principle facts the other circumstantial evidence gives context to.

Consequently, whether there was a conspiracy or not is independent of a Mafia investigation. And the acoustical studies should be



done for the sake of history, not necessarily for the sake of a current investigation. And they can be done, and ought to be done, independent of a criminal investigation. The decision that there are no active leads does not preclude doing the scientific study. The committee's recommendations are clear on this. They said, "Do the scientific stuff. Look into the record as a whole. And then tell us what you think ought to be done." And I don't see any reason why they can't be done independently.

DIR: If there is justice, would you expect indictments of some Mafia figures to come out of this eventually?

BLAKEY: Well, there is justice, but it's human justice. Let the Lord take care of divine justice in His own time. And I'm not concerned about Him. He'll take care of His problems in His own way, in His own time. What's left to us is human justice—which is imperfect. And it would be a tragedy for it to be imperfect in the context of a presidential assassination or the assassination of Dr. King. Tragic. But I've never suggested that life wasn't tragic. It is. Would I expect indictments in either case? I would say they are possible in both cases. They are feasible in both cases. They are not highly likely in either case. What I am saying is that there are people alive who may have been involved. It doesn't follow that you will get the evidence to prove that they did it or were involved.

WAITING FOR JUSTICE'S ACOUSTIC STUDY

The current review of the HSCA's final JFK Report is being overseen by the Justice Department's Criminal Division. Its staff has been aware of the committee's recommendations for almost a year now, and behind the scenes they have been slowly preparing extensive option memos about how they should handle it if a policy decision is made at the top to proceed. The final decision is officially up to Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti and FBI Director William Webster.

One of the committee's recommendations was that the Justice Department have qualified experts redo the Barger/Weiss-Aschkenasy acoustic analysis which concluded there were four shots fired in Dealey Plaza. Because this finding is generally perceived as the "new" evidence which turned the committee around to a conspiracy conclusion, the Department has decided that confirming this data is their first task. But considering the range of matters the Department deliberates over, the review of the JFK case has a low priority and is apparently stalled in the bureaucracy.

Though former committee staffers are confident the Department will eventually uphold the four-shot verdict, they are disappointed the work has not been completed already. Because there is no concerted media or political pressure on the Department to react quickly, findings are not expected for at least another six months.

Despite the delay, former counsel Blakey confidently states, "The feedback I get from the FBI is that they know it is going to come out our way." "They will contract out for the acoustics," he continues. "It's the FBI's judgment that it would *not* be wise for them to do it them-

selves—for obvious reasons. If they said that we were wrong, nobody would believe them."

According to an informed source, FBI Director Webster has an in-house acoustics team ready to do the work and they could finish the job in 60 days after a go-ahead, but he is holding back and waiting for the Department to hire outside contractors to complete the work first, so that the initial news coverage would come from their impartial reanalysis. Only then would the FBI team confirm it with a second opinion.

Little information can be gotten from official spokesmen. "The review is still underway," is about all Justice spokesman Robert Havel would confirm. "No outside consultants have begun work yet and no time frame has been set." The FBI is even more non-committal. "Our review is still going on," says FBI spokesman Dave Cassens. "We won't say anything until our report is completed, and even then any comments will come from Justice."

The Washington scuttlebutt is that both Webster and Civiletti are moderately favorable to pursuing the committee's recommendations, with Webster more so than Civiletti. The signal to proceed awaits Civiletti's approval. He is said to be grappling with such political considerations as how much it will cost, who he should put in charge, and whether the whole thing will end up making the Department look foolish. A detailed report has been prepared for him laying out the project and his options, including—names of contractors, expected time and costs, staff within the Department who should work on it, and what questions need to be answered in the reanalysis.

The specific acoustic recommendation in the HSCA *Final Report* reads: "The National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice [LEAA] of the Department of Justice and the National Science Foundation [NSF] should make a study of the theory and application of the principles of acoustics to forensic questions, using the materials available in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy as a case study."

To date there is no concrete progress to report from either the LEAA or the NSF on this recommendation.

The LEAA's forensics department, which has no in-house acoustics experts of its own, has been assigned the job of studying the HSCA's acoustics report under the Department's supervision. "The project is progressing," informs a source privy to the LEAA's preliminary groundwork, "though no outside contractors have been assigned the job. It's going forward slowly to be certain that the work is done right." This source also anticipates at least another six months before results are made public.

The NSF's situation is a completely different one. The NSF does not conduct research or investigations itself, as the LEAA does. The NSF is a federal grant funding agency. A contractor or university submits a research proposal to them which their specialists then evaluate; if it is accepted (only one out of four proposals are), they win the grant and the NSF gives them the money to conduct the experiment.

The NSF does not actively solicit proposals on specific subjects, such as the HSCA's acoustics, and to date it has not received any proposals to do such a study. "To the extent that there is something for us to do we will be ready, willing and able to do that," says NSF spokesman Arthur Knopka. But he adds that they will not participate in the Justice Department's (LEAA) study unless the Department specifically asks them to help in evaluating the proposals or the contractors. The Department has done nothing like that yet.

Unless circumstances change dramatically in the JFK investigation Knopka predicts that no acoustics proposals will be forthcoming to the NSF. "It's not all that likely," he says. "A year has already gone by and frankly, serious scholars who are very good researchers tend not to want to bite off a controversial issue where they are likely to get too much static out of the very problem they are working on."

—J.G.



OSWALD PATHOLOGIST SAYS HE DIDN'T TRY TO VERIFY IDENTITY

IOWA CITY, Iowa, Oct.29 (AP)—The pathologist who performed an autopsy in Dallas 16 years ago on the body tagged as that of Lee Harvey Oswald says he made no attempt to verify its identity.

Dr. Earl Rose, a pathology professor at the University of Iowa, was a Dallas County medical examiner in November 1963, when Oswald was shot by Jack Ruby. He said verifying the identity of the body brought in for an autopsy was not part of his job.

"An autopsy is done to determine the cause of death," Rose said in an interview Sunday night. "I performed an autopsy on a body identified to me as Lee Harvey Oswald."

"X-Rays were taken and I made fingerprints and the police made fingerprints," and those records were included in the autopsy report, the pathologist said.

But he said he made no attempt to confirm Oswald's identity by matching the fingerprints he took with those in Oswald's military records. "It's up to someone else to match them," Rose said. "I didn't attempt to do this and I would not. I'm not a fingerprint expert."

Washington Post, 10/30/79

PATHOLOGIST SAYS AUTOPSY VERIFIED OSWALD IDENTITY

By United Press International

The pathologist who performed an autopsy on the body of Lee Harvey Oswald says he documented the identity of the assassin's corpse through fingerprints.

Earlier this month, Charles Petty, the Dallas County medical examiner, requested exhumation of the body in Oswald's grave to answer discrepancies reported between Oswald's military record and the autopsy report compiled after the assassin's murder by Jack Ruby.

But Dr. Earl Rose, who performed the autopsy, offered possible explanations for the reported discrepancies, which include differences in height and weight between the autopsy report and Oswald's service record.

Dr. Rose, who teaches at the University of Iowa, said he took the corpse's fingerprints. He said he estimated the weight because the Dallas facility lacked a large enough scale. This, he said, possibly accounts for the difference from military records. Measurements of the length of a corpse lying flat on an autopsy table often differ from height measurements taken before death, he said.

New York Times, 10/29/79

The above comparison is a striking example of the clarity with which the major media reports on the JFK case—in this instance, as part of the continuing, tedious, and unsubstantiated saga of British author Michael Eddowes and his KGB Oswald theory.

Note the headlines. Did the pathologist verify Oswald's identity or didn't he? The AP/*Washington Post* and the UP/*New York Times* apparently disagree. The AP/*Post* version gives the reader the impression there could still be

doubt about the identity of the buried Oswald because Dr. Rose "made no attempt to verify the identity." The UP/*Times* story accurately reports that Dr. Rose *can* account for the reported discrepancies of the body to the Marine records. Neither account mentions the HSCA investigation into this matter or their firm conclusion that there was no KGB double. (The HSCA finding was based on Oswald's identification by his mother and brother and expert analysis of handwriting samples taken before and after his Soviet defection.)

ASSASSIN MISSES VECIANA

An unidentified assailant tried to murder Antonio Veciana in Miami two months ago as he drove home from work in the early evening. Veciana received a minor gunshot wound to the head but, otherwise, miraculously escaped unhurt.

Miami police said Veciana, the founder of the militant anti-Castro group Alpha 66, was turning a streetcorner when a brown 1971 Buick station wagon pulled alongside his pick-up truck. Four .45 caliber bullets were fired directly at Veciana. The first shot shattered the outside rearview mirror, and a piece of the slug caught Veciana just above the left temple. It was only a flesh wound and at first he thought he had been hit by a flying stone from the road. A second bullet then shattered his vent window. "At that point," he said later, "I knew it was an assassination." The third shot grazed through the front windshield. The fourth shot passed through the driver's door just above rib level and was deflected slightly so that it passed in front of him, singeing his right forearm, and continuing out through the far side door. Veciana was hospitalized for two days.

Miami police and the FBI were investigating the shooting. "We are looking into possible political circumstances and possible drug relationships," police spokesman Calvin Ross told the *Miami News*. "There are no leads and no suspects." Veciana told the *News* that the FBI told him it was investigating the September 21 incident because of a possible connection with agents of a foreign government.

Veciana predictably blamed the attack on a Castro-inspired campaign that is out to get him. He believes this effort included false drug charges several years ago that sent him to federal prison in Atlanta for 18 months. He maintains "a band of Castro spies" has been permitted to operate in Miami to supply the Cuban government details of anti-Castro activity in South Florida.

Veciana told reporters he was warned by FBI agents last October about the possibility of such an attempt on his life. He cites this as evidence that the shooting was carried out with the acquiescence of U.S. officials. "I think the U.S. government is cooperating with the Castro police," Veciana told the *Miami Herald*.

The Veciana shooting closely resembled an assassination which took place in Puerto Rico eight months ago. Last April, Carlos Muniz, operator of a travel agency that offered trips for exiles to Cuba, was shot to death by unknown attackers who drove up alongside his car



THE MAN WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD. MAYBE.

and fired .45 caliber bullets into his auto. The similarity to the Veciana shooting apparently ends there however, because Muniz was an enemy of anti-Castro militants due to his sympathy with attempts to ease tensions between exiles and the Cuban government.

Veciana, now 50, was a Havana accountant who fled Cuba in 1961 and founded Alpha 66 in Puerto Rico in 1962. He directed many raids against Cuba during the 1960's and has been named as the organizer of several unsuccessful assassination attempts on Castro, the last occurring in 1971 when Castro visited Chile.

Veciana is also the source of the Maurice Bishop story. In 1976, Veciana told Gaeton Fonzi (then a staff investigator for Senator Richard Schweiker's Intelligence subcommittee) that an American named Bishop, who Veciana believed to be an intelligence officer, had directed him in all of his covert activities from 1961-71, including the Castro assassination tries. According to Veciana, in August 1963, when he arrived in the lobby of a Dallas office building to meet with Bishop, his mysterious contact was already there talking to a young man. Veciana was not introduced at that time, but after the JFK assassination he recognized Lee Oswald as the man he had seen with Bishop.

On July 30, 1978 the HSCA released a composite sketch of Bishop, produced from a detailed description provided by Veciana, but the committee was unable to identify him. Based on circumstantial evidence some investigators believe Bishop is former CIA man David Phillips. (Phillips denies it and so does Veciana). The HSCA investigated the Phillips/Bishop evidence thoroughly, but inconclusively, and the Veciana allegation about Oswald also remains an "indeterminate" mystery. (See HSCA Volume X, pps. 37-56).

Veciana now lives with his wife and children in the Miami area and works mainly at a marine supply store, which he refers to as "the family business." He also has a few investments and dabbles in boxing promotions, which he had been doing for many years in Puerto Rico.

In recent years he has been termed a "non-active" member of Alpha 66. Although he is still involved in the exile movement, "he's way behind the scenes at this point," says one source close to him. "You won't see or hear of him coming forth as a spokesman as he had been doing years ago. But he told me once that more than anything else in his life he wants to kill Castro."

—J.G.

One of the more intriguing figures in the JFK assassination case is Yuri Ivanovich Nosenko, a former KGB officer who defected to the United States fifteen years ago with a story to tell about Lee Harvey Oswald's sojourn in the Soviet Union. Nosenko was the highest-ranking Soviet intelligence officer ever to defect to the United States, and for a brief moment he enjoyed his status as a major prize of the spy wars. But soon the CIA began to doubt the truth of his information and to suspect he might be a Soviet penetration agent—a "mole." The agency clapped him into a five-year imprisonment, complete with torture. Years later, after a bitter internal dispute within the CIA, his tormentors changed their minds again, declared him a good-faith defector, and brought him onto the CIA payroll as a consultant. There he remained for ten years until a congressional investigating committee fingered him as a suspicious character and a liar after all, raising again the question of whether he might also be a Soviet mole, as had originally been suspected.

These sharp changes in Nosenko's fortunes with the CIA define the main twists of a spy story that has become basic to our understanding of the JFK assassination, the conflict within the CIA, the apparent murder a year ago of a covert CIA officer named John Paisley, and the still-unfolding drama of alleged Soviet moles in the top levels of the CIA. Dormant for years, the Nosenko affair may now be growing into the most important spy story since that of Nathan Hale.

Oswald reached Moscow in October, 1959, announced his defection, and applied for citizenship in the Soviet Union. His quid pro quo was that he had important military secrets to divulge, an offer that (as we now know) put him in the secret sights of the Second Directorate of the KGB's Seventh Department, the unit responsible for counterintelligence surveillance of tourists and defectors. Yuri Nosenko was deputy chief of this unit. Thus, he was the administrator of the KGB's Oswald file.

In the Soviet Union, Oswald was an enthusiastic comrade at first, but then grew disenchanted and homesick. In February, 1961, he applied to the U.S. embassy in Moscow for repatriation to the states. In March, he met Marina Pruskova. In April, he married her. A year later, in June, 1962, he and Marina left the Soviet Union for Texas.

Nosenko, then serving as the KGB security escort to the Soviet delegation at the arms-control talks in Geneva, also made a big move that month. He found a private place and moment to ask an American diplomat to put him in touch with an appropriate U.S. intelligence officer. He had a proposal to make.

Soon Nosenko was talking secretly with the CIA's Geneva counterintelligence officer, Tennant "Pete" Bagley. Nosenko's story was that he had gone on a foolish drunken spree and spent nine hundred Swiss francs belonging to the KGB. He had to replace it quickly. Otherwise he would be discovered, fired, and heavily penalized. But if the United States could meet his small financial needs, he could survive. For such support, Nosenko would supply certain pieces of information in which he was sure the United States would be interested, such as the location of the KGB bugs in the American embassy in Moscow or the identities of Soviet agents working within the U.S. intelligence system. He did not want to defect overtly. He had a family in the Soviet Union. He would not give them up. Nor would he talk to the CIA inside the Soviet Union, only when he was in Geneva.

Bagley encouraged Nosenko. An agent-in-place was the most useful of all defectors, because he could maintain a constant flow of fresh intelligence and be directed toward specific targets.

But soon a doubt began to form in Bagley's mind about Nosenko. The problem was with the quality of intelligence Nosenko was delivering. A previous Soviet defector, Anatoli Golitsin (called Mr. X in the House Select Committee on Assassinations' final report), had given the U.S. much the same information in even sharper form. The Soviets knew, of course, that Golitsin had already divulged or compromised the information that Nosenko was now fobbing off as hot



new stuff. As Bagley later told the assassinations committee in executive session, he had begun to think that Nosenko was in fact "a sent KGB agent dispatched to deflect and negate" the authentic information of Golitsin. Bagley came to think, moreover, that Nosenko was not the man he said he was, that he had never been the deputy chief of the Second Directorate, that he had never administered Oswald's KGB file, and that the whole story was a "legend," a cover story for a deep-penetration mission.

In September of 1963, Oswald was in Mexico City. He applied at the Soviet embassy for a visa to the Soviet Union. Nosenko later told his CIA and FBI questioners that he had personally reviewed and rejected this application, even though he was not now connected with the Second Directorate. He also said that in late November, after the killings in Dallas, he had reviewed the entire KGB Oswald file.

But now came a sudden change. On January 23, 1964, on Nosenko's first visit to Geneva after the assassination of JFK, Nosenko told Bagley that he had changed his mind about defecting. He was disillusioned with the Soviet system. His family would be taken care of. He wanted to come to the United States and begin a new life.

Bagley hesitated. His suspicions of Nosenko had not yet hardened but were hard to deny. He put Nosenko off.

Then, a week and a half later, Nosenko forced the issue. On February 4, he informed Bagley that he had just received a wire from KGB headquarters calling him home. He was sure he had been found out or was about to be. If he went back to Moscow, he would never come out again. It was now or never. Bagley swallowed his misgivings, and the CIA spirited Nosenko off to Washington. He was almost a free man.

Nosenko had already been questioned twice about Oswald by the CIA while he was still in Geneva, on January 23 and 30, 1964. Having arrived in the states in late February, he was questioned again on Oswald, this time by the FBI.

The FBI accepted Nosenko's story of Oswald's stay in the Soviet Union—that the KGB had been hardly interested in Oswald at all, that it had carried out only the most perfunctory and routine surveillance of his activities, and that in no way—this was the bottom line and the real point—was Oswald a KGB assassin in Dallas. Nosenko's message was: Oswald may have looked like a juicy intelligence morsel, but the KGB had declined the bait, had paid him no special attention, and if he had killed the president, the U.S.S.R. was not to blame.

A plausible message. What Soviet need to see JFK eliminated could have been so piercing as to motivate the immense risk of an assassination scheme? But senior officers of the CIA, like Bagley, did not accept his claim.

What made Nosenko's story impossible for the CIA to accept in those early days was what he said about Oswald and the KGB. For what Nosenko told his CIA questioners about the KGB's attitude toward Oswald didn't correspond at all with the CIA's best idea of the Soviet spy manual. The CIA could not believe that the Soviets would ignore a target like Oswald, who bragged of his information on U.S. radar and hinted (some said) at knowledge of the U-2 aircraft—at that point the CIA's most secret secret. As Bagley told the House assassinations committee much later, "the KGB . . . would face an American swimming into their sea . . . like a pool of piranhas."

So when Nosenko said the piranhas only yawned at Oswald, Bagley couldn't believe it. Nosenko had to be lying. If he was lying about this, what else was he lying about?

And this was important. As then—deputy director of the CIA Richard Helms told the House committee last September, "It is difficult to overstate the significance that Yuri Nosenko's defection assumed in the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination. If Mr. Nosenko turned out to be a bona fide defector, if his information were to be believed, then we could conclude that the KGB and the Soviet Union had nothing to do with Lee Harvey Oswald in 1963 and therefore had nothing to do with President Kennedy's murder.

"If on the other hand," continued Helms, "Mr. Nosenko had been programmed in advance by the KGB to minimize KGB connections with Oswald, if Mr. Nosenko was giving us false information about Oswald's contacts with the KGB in 1959 to 1962, it was fair for us to surmise that there may have been an Oswald-KGB connection in November, 1963, more specifically that Oswald was acting as a Soviet agent when he shot President Kennedy."

"If it were shown that Oswald was in fact acting as a Soviet agent when he shot President Kennedy," Helms went on, "the consequences to the United States of America and indeed to the world, would have been staggering. Thus, it became a matter of the utmost importance to this government to determine the bona fides of Mr. Yuri Nosenko."

By March, 1964, Nosenko's credibility with the CIA had totally eroded. No one believed him about Oswald, and few believed him about anything else. Helms, Bagley (by this time promoted to deputy chief of the Soviet Bloc Division), and Bagley's superior, David Murphy, were united with the chief of CIA counterintelligence, James Angleton, in viewing Nosenko, as Bagley put it, as "a false defector on a disinformation mission."

Nosenko may have still thought at this time that he carried a little clout. Through the FBI, he offered to tell the Warren Commission all he knew about Oswald. The offer was rejected. Nosenko's name does not appear in the Warren Report.

On April 4, 1964, meeting what he thought was a doctor's appointment, Nosenko was arrested by the CIA and transported to a specially prepared safe house in North Arlington, Virginia, where he was confined in a cell that his current CIA defender, John Hart, told the committee was "most comparable to a bank vault." When Nosenko failed a lie-detector test, the CIA became convinced that he was an unregenerate Soviet agent. But Nosenko refused to budge from his story.

This led the CIA to the use of inquisitorial methods. Under the control of David Murphy's interrogation team—including John Paisley, an officer who will reenter the narrative much later as a corpse—Nosenko was isolated in solitary confinement in his CIA bank vault for more than three years. He was tortured during this time. Overall, the CIA kept him in custody for about five years.

The revelation last fall of this sorry episode was at once logged in as yet another CIA scandal. The CIA's John Hart, part of the pro-Nosenko group that took charge of Nosenko in 1968, flatly called it "an abomination."

To which Bagley replied before the committee, "Please bear in mind that I find this case . . . just as 'abominable' as Mr. Hart does. It's implications are ugly. It imposed immense and unpleasant tasks upon us and strains upon the agency, which are all too visible today in your committee's hearings."

The central problem facing the CIA, Bagley said, was "Nosenko's credibility and what lies behind his message to America concerning the KGB's relations with Lee Harvey Oswald." He went on, "The detention of Nosenko was designed initially to give us an opportunity to confront him with certain contradictions in his story . . . Our aim was, as Mr. Hart said, to get a confession: either of KGB sponsorship or of which lies could, finally, form some believable pattern."

The sticking point in Nosenko's story was his stubborn assertion that Oswald had not been of serious interest to the KGB. David Murphy told assassinations committee counsel Ken Klein, "The Soviet Union with foreigners don't do that," and went on to explain the importance to the Soviets of Oswald's technical knowledge of the U-2 spy plane. That Nosenko should maintain that the KGB did not question Oswald or closely watch his activities in the Soviet Union despite this knowledge, explained Murphy, "is one of the things that created an atmosphere of disbelief, [a feeling] that there must be something to this case that is important, vitally important, to the Soviet Union, and we can't understand it."

Nosenko had had other problems with the CIA as well. His leads had not been useful. Golitsin had already told it all. The CIA's background check was turning up indications that Nosenko was not the



person he said he was. Two previous defectors whose usefulness to the U.S. had been established were skeptical of him. But his biggest problem remained his story about Oswald. That was the story he seemed to have come to tell, and that was the story no one could believe.

In 1966 Nosenko was given another polygraph examination. Again he failed. Helms knew, too, that Murphy and Bagley were preparing a gigantic document, called "The Thousand-Page Report," fully stating their argument that Nosenko was a KGB plant.

But Helms faltered at this point. "I made the decision," he told the committee, "that the case simply could not go on in that fashion; it had to be resolved." In October, 1967, Helms assigned Bruce Solie of the CIA Office of Security to review the case. Solie at once objected to the isolation of Nosenko and had him moved to comfortable quarters.

In February, 1968, the CIA Soviet Bloc Division submitted a four-hundred-page condensation of the original report, concluding that Nosenko was a liar. But Nosenko now had a CIA defender in Bruce Solie. Solie responded to the four hundred pages with eighteen pages of his own, criticizing the Murphy-Bagley conclusion and saying that Nosenko was a good-faith defector who was telling what he thought to be the truth about Oswald and the KGB. Solie recommended further interviews by new people and another lie-detector test.

Nosenko's third polygraph exam was administered in August, 1968, under the supervision of Solie's Office of Security rather than Murphy's Soviet Bloc Division. There is no ready explanation for the fact that Nosenko was said to have passed this third test. But ten years later, the House assassinations committee brought in an independent polygraph expert to review the 1964, 1966, and 1968 tests. The expert concluded that only the second of these was valid—one of the two, of course, that Nosenko failed. But that was ten years later. In 1968, the new test appeared to put Nosenko back on the sunny side of the CIA.

Then in October, 1968, Nosenko-advocate Solie issued an in-house memo disputing all the findings of the Murphy-Bagley report. "Nosenko," wrote Solie, "is identical to the person he claims to be." As for the Oswald-KGB question, said Solie, that was "an FBI matter." He had no reason to disbelieve Nosenko or question his sincerity on this point. Solie told the committee that he "did not have all the facts" on Oswald because Oswald was not a main area of CIA interrogation of Nosenko. The statement directly conflicted with Helms' testimony that Oswald's stay in Russia constituted—"no question about it"—a major area of CIA questioning of Nosenko.

Later in 1968, over the anguished protests of Murphy and Bagley, and their interrogation team, the CIA formally conceded Nosenko's good faith and authenticity. On the first of March, 1969, Nosenko was compensated for his time under arrest and "employed as an independent contractor for the CIA" at a salary of \$16,500 a year. "I was imprisoned for the whole five years," said Nosenko to the House assassinations committee, "and I started my life in the U.S.A. in April of 1969."

By 1973, Helms and James Angleton, strong Nosenko skeptics, had been pushed out of the agency. John Hart authored a CIA internal study of the Nosenko controversy and found that Nosenko, though not reliable on the Oswald-KGB question, was sincere.

Nosenko was thus vindicated. Soon he was lecturing CIA and FBI classes on Soviet intelligence. But his problems were not over.

In 1976 Congress created the House Select Committee on Assassinations to look into the controversies surrounding the murders of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. By the middle of 1977, a deputy counsel for the committee, Ken Klein, was assigned full time to the Nosenko question. Said one of Klein's colleagues on the committee staff, "Kenny was in a bit over his head on Nosenko and the whole Kennedy case, but he worked on nothing but Nosenko for a year; and finally he broke him down."

The breaking of Nosenko, after all these years and efforts, took place early in the summer of 1978. Klein put Nosenko through some twenty hours of hostile interrogation, playing constantly upon the myriad contradictions and inconsistencies in Nosenko's story. "He just went to tatters when we got to him," said the staffer.

What did the breaking of Nosenko reveal? While the transcript of this particular encounter is not available, it is known that, in the end, "the committee was certain Nosenko had lied about Oswald."

Under the pressure of Klein's questioning, Nosenko changed his Oswald story in two particularly important respects. The first, key one involves the KGB file on Oswald. Nosenko formerly characterized this file as all but nonexistent. He insisted that the KGB had carried out no surveillance of Oswald and that he personally had "thoroughly reviewed Oswald's file." Now he told the Congress that this file comprised "seven or eight thick volumes," most of them containing "information relating to the surveillance" of Oswald by the KGB, and only one of which Nosenko said he had a chance to look at.

Second, Nosenko had always maintained that the KGB didn't know anything about Oswald's relationship with Marina until they were married. "There was no surveillance on Oswald to show that he knew her," he told the FBI in 1964. But in 1978, when counsel Klein asked him, "If [Oswald] met Marina on March 17, how long would you estimate it would take before the KGB would know about her?" Nosenko's answer was: "In the same March they would have quite a big batch of material on her."

So a completely different picture of the KGB's interest in Lee and Marina Oswald emerged, and with it a completely different picture of Nosenko's defection. The committee does not go so far as to say that Nosenko was—is—a Soviet plant. "In the end," reads its final report, "the committee [like the Warren Commission], was unable to resolve the Nosenko matter." But as a staff member confided shortly after the report was published last summer, "Yeah, basically I would really have to go with the theory that he's a plant."

Suppose this is correct. If Nosenko lied when he said that Oswald had not been closely watched and questioned by the KGB, was he also lying when he said that Oswald had not been recruited by the KGB and that he was not a Soviet agent or assassin when he returned to the states?

One's first impulse, of course, is to assume that whatever a liar says is the opposite of the truth. If Nosenko is a liar, and says Oswald was not a KGB agent, then Oswald must have been a KGB agent. If Nosenko, the liar, says that the Soviet Union did not send Oswald to kill Kennedy, then the Soviet Union must be the one to blame.

Is that what the CIA thought about the JFK assassination until the middle of 1968? *That the Russians did it?*

Bagley protested to the committee that, even though he thought Oswald a KGB agent, he did not think the Soviets had ordered him to kill Kennedy. Nosenko's "message," said Bagley, "hides the possibility that [Oswald] is or could have been a Soviet agent. [But] by 'Soviet agent' I don't mean a Soviet assassination agent. I mean something quite different... Perhaps he was a sleeper agent... They may have said, 'We will get in touch with you in time of war'... But then if he is on their rolls as a sleeper agent or for wartime sabotage or something of that sort, they would be absolutely shocked to hear their man had taken it upon himself to kill the American president." And as Bagley says elsewhere, "The Soviets have shown a proclivity to use tricky methods like this to give us messages through clandestine means." Thus, he thinks the KGB "might indeed change the mission of another man of another operation [Nosenko] in order to get this message over to us, that they really had nothing to do with [the assassination]."

But this fine distinction was lost as the CIA's interpretation of Oswald's alleged act percolated up to President Johnson. Earl Warren writes that he at first resisted Johnson's request that he head up the JFK inquiry, and that Johnson "then told me how serious were



the rumors floating around the world. The gravity of the situation was such that it might lead us into war, he said, and if so, it might be a nuclear war. He went on to tell me that he had just talked to Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, who had advised him that the first nuclear strike against us might cause the loss of forty million people. I then said, 'Mr. President, if the situation is that serious, my personal views do not count. I will do it.' He thanked me, and I left the White House."

What can this mean if not that the CIA's theory of the JFK assassination led Johnson, and thus Warren, to fear that the price of the truth in this case could easily be World War III? Nosenko's apparent lies about Oswald in Russia became the basis of that fear.

But this view of Nosenko and Oswald did not, and does not, prevail. The assassinations committee finally declared that "there is no evidence that the Soviet government had any interest in removing President Kennedy, nor is there any evidence that it planned to take advantage of the president's death before it happened or attempted to capitalize on it after it occurred." The committee concluded, therefore, "on the basis of the evidence available to it, that the Soviet government was not involved in the assassination."

Well. If it is true that Oswald was not a Russian agent assigned to shoot the president, then Nosenko told the truth on that count. If Nosenko is nevertheless thought to have lied substantially about Oswald and the KGB, what could be the explanation for his strange mixture of truth and lies?

And to come to the practical heart of the whole Nosenko mystery, why, if the Russians had nothing to do with Kennedy's death, would they have contrived so intricate a method of conveying this critical information as that of a false defector? Said Bagley, "Why they might have selected this channel to send [this information], and what truth may lie behind the story given to us, can only be guessed at . . . I couldn't find any logical or any illogical explanation for why [Nosenko] said what he said about Oswald."

A source on the assassinations committee staff expressed the same bewilderment: "You'd have to assume that Khrushchev and even Brezhnev would have had to make the decision to send Nosenko in here like that. And it would have looked so risky. I just can't see why they would have made that decision. When [Nosenko] breaks down, he sobs, he gets real bitter, and he says he doesn't care what we believe, but if we ever try to torture him again, the word is going straight out to Daniel Schorr!"

I needed clarification on this. Was there any suggestion that Nosenko had a *continuing* espionage role?

"No," said the source, "nobody says that. The theory is that he was sent to do the JFK stuff."

How does this bear on CIA internal power struggles?

"Well, Angleton and those people [i.e., the anti-Nosenko group] really had to go. They were the most sinister of all people there."

"Really?" I asked. "More sinister than William Colby?" (Colby took over from Helms as CIA head in 1973.)

"Oh, sure!"

"The Colby who supervised the assassination of some 50,000 Vietnamese people in Operation Phoenix?"

The source laughed. "Oh, well, that! But I mean, apart from mass murder, you know, Colby's pretty straight!"

I have a simpler explanation—a rather innocent explanation, in fact—for why the Soviet leadership might have chosen the Nosenko method of communicating to the United States leadership that Kennedy was not a Soviet victim.

Grant Bagley's point about the "piranhas" of the KGB and assume that Oswald, indeed, had been questioned at length and in detail by Soviet intelligence people. Assume, too, that the Soviets at the same time remained wary of Oswald and found him too unstable and mysterious for recruitment. The KGB took what it could get from him,

was very possibly surprised at the usefulness of his information, rewarded him with a nice job and a comfortable apartment and the privilege of owning and shooting a rifle, and kept him at arm's length.

So Oswald goes home, and in a year and a half, Kennedy is killed. The Soviets are shocked to see their friend Oswald accused, then killed himself. Their urgent review of the KGB Oswald file discloses that a paranoid imagination could easily be led to see Oswald as a KGB recruit. That was not true, but it *looked* true, just as though Oswald had been groomed for that very purpose. Was someone trying to frame the KGB for the Kennedy assassination? How could the Soviets convincingly inform the wounded, suspicious Americans that appearances were, in this case, deceiving? A convincing reassurance could not be given by officials because, if the assassination of JFK were an official Soviet act, naturally, Soviet officials would be sworn to keep it secret.

So if the Soviets' message that Oswald was not a KGB assassin were to be delivered as a fact commanding belief, then they would have to deliver it through somebody in a position to *know* it for a fact. That meant the message had to come from the KGB, because only someone from the KGB, and indeed from the specific KGB section that handled Oswald, could even begin to know whether Oswald was or was not a target of serious KGB surveillance while he was in Russia, or whether he was or was not dispatched to the United States as a sleeper, assassin, or whatever by the KGB.

In fact, such a message could only be delivered by a KGB defector. KGB in order to know the truth, and a *defector* in order to want to tell it to the Americans. No other communication channel would even be logical. No matter how risky the Nosenko method must have looked, the very logic of the situation, as in a game of chess, may have demanded it.

On the afternoon of September 25, 1978, ten days after John Hart, CIA, defended Nosenko before the House assassinations committee and just three days after Richard Helms, CIA, restated the case against him, the skipper of a crab boat in lower Chesapeake Bay looked up from his work to see bearing down on him a graceful sailing sloop, *Brillig*.

The wind was brisk. The *Brillig* was light in the water and clipped along in the light chop rapidly on a collision course. The crabber finally realized the *Brillig* had not seen him, though the day was clear. He hit his engines. He barely managed to clear the *Brillig's* charging bow. Angrily he radioed the Coast Guard to complain. It is not known if he noticed there was no one aboard the *Brillig*.

Coast Guardsmen discovered the empty sailboat grounded a few hours later, farther down the bay. Aboard they found an open jar of mustard and a half-made sandwich in the galley, a folding table torn off its hinges, secret CIA documents relating to Soviet military capability, and a highly classified burst transceiver, used only to transmit and receive sophisticated radio codes. The tiller was unlocked.

In just a few hours the *Brillig* was identified as John Paisley's craft and Paisley was identified as a "former" high-level official of the CIA now working for the agency on a consulting basis on a highly sensitive study of CIA assessments of Soviet capability. When last heard from in a routine radio call he had sent earlier that day, announcing that he was coming in, Paisley was aboard the *Brillig*. Now the *Brillig* was beached and Paisley was missing.

When Paisley's estranged wife, Maryann, heard of the beaching of the *Brillig*, she sent their son, Eddie, twenty-two, to check out his father's apartment. Eddie found the place ransacked and all of Paisley's papers gone. Several nine-millimeter bullets were scattered on the closet floor. Mrs. Paisley was all the more distressed to hear of this break-in because Paisley's apartment was in the same building, on the same floor, and off the same hallway as apartments of Soviet embassy employees whom Maryann Paisley knew to be under constant CIA surveillance.



On October 1 a year ago, the Coast Guard pulled a body from the bay. It was bloated and badly decomposed. Positive identification was impossible. But a consensus emerged among examiners, insurance agents, and two Paisley acquaintances who saw the body, that it was John Paisley's—despite such disturbing physical differences as the fact that Paisley stood 5'11", weighed 170 pounds, wore a beard and a full head of hair, while the body fished out of the bay was four inches shorter, 30 pounds lighter, beardless, and bald.

There was a nine-millimeter gunshot wound behind the body's left ear. There were thirty-eight pounds of diving weights strapped around its waist.

The official verdict was suicide, but Maryann Paisley did not believe it. She retained long-time family friend Bernard Fensterwald, the Washington attorney who handled James McCord during Watergate days, to try to fight the cover-up.

Mrs. Paisley called attention to her own "CIA background" in a furious letter she wrote at the beginning of this year to CIA director Stansfield Turner, protesting the CIA's "hands-off" attitude toward her husband's death.

"I was particularly anxious for Mr. Fensterwald to talk with Katherine Hart," she wrote, "because it is her husband, John, who is the agency's expert on Yuri Nosenko. You know that John Paisley [whose "activities," she wrote elsewhere, "were certainly not confined to the overt side"] was deeply involved in Nosenko's indescribable debriefing. It has crossed my mind, and that of others, that my husband's fate might be somehow connected with the Nosenko case."

So Paisley was part of Nosenko's "indescribable debriefing," was he? It is known from other sources that in 1972 and 1973 Paisley was also involved heavily in a CIA-wide search for a suspected Soviet mole. Paisley's job was then to determine if Soviet defectors were double agents, and he directly questioned Nosenko and another Soviet defector who came over at the same time, Soviet navy captain Nicholas Shadrin, who disappeared while walking through a public square in Vienna in 1975.

Thus, Paisley was a part of the group that regarded Nosenko as a false defector. So we can add his name to a group made up of Helms, Bagley, Murphy, and Angleton, none of whom are working for the CIA anymore, either.

Nosenko, however, as you read this, is drawing a CIA salary of \$35,325 a year and lecturing our counterintelligence trainees and future foreign-liason officers on the Soviet practice of the intelligence arts, as well as playing some direct role in current CIA counterintelligence operations.

This is not, alas, a finished story. Questions abound. Was it really Paisley's body that was found so sea-changed in Chesapeake Bay? If not, who might have orchestrated the cover-up that identified the body as his? And why? Is there substance to Maryann Paisley's belief that her husband was deeply involved in covert CIA operations and the Nosenko interrogation? Could Paisley's strange disappearance, as his wife suspects, have had anything to do with the assassinations committee's breaking of Nosenko's Oswald story shortly before? Was Nosenko a false defector sent to conceal a Soviet role in the assassination of Kennedy? Or to convey, through a calculated lie, the essential truth of Soviet innocence in the JFK murder?

On such mysteries, the Nosenko matter—perhaps from now on it should be called "the Nosenko-Paisley matter"—hangs in uncertainty and suspense, waiting for someone's next move.

—C.O.

[Reprinted courtesy of *Boston Magazine*. This article originally appeared in the October, 1979 issue.]

RECOMMENDED READING

1. Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept The Secrets-Richard Helms and the CIA*, Knopf, New York, 1979.
2. Dennis Eisenberg, Uri Dan, Eli Landau, *Meyer Lansky - Mogul of the Mob*, Paddington Press, New York and London, 1979.
3. William C. Sullivan with Bill Brown, *The Bureau - My Thirty Years in Hoover's FBI*, W.W. Norton, New York, 1979.
4. G. Robert Blakey and David Belin letters, *National Review*, 9/28/79.
5. Jeff Goldberg, "Who Killed John Paisley?", *Inquiry*, 10/15/79.
6. Joseph Daughen and John Farmer, "The War Inside the CIA," *Philadelphia Bulletin*, 9/23 thru 9/27/79. Five part series on moles, Nosenko, Paisley and the Helms-Colby rift.

FUTURE BOOKS

Several books on the JFK case are in progress and expected to be published in the next year. Here's a quick rundown:

1. *Echoes of Conspiracy*, by Peter Dale Scott, Paul Hoch, Josiah Thompson, and Russell Stetler will probably be the first book out on the HSCA Report. Publication from Pocket Books is anticipated in late winter. It features commentary on the HSCA's acoustics/ballistics analysis, a history of the committee and the JFK issue, and Professor Scott's detailed research into the cover-up.
2. *Not In Your Lifetime*, by Anthony Summers for McGraw-Hill is also scheduled for later this winter. Summers, a British author/film producer (1978 BBC documentary, "The JFK Assassination: What Do We Know Now That We Didn't Know Then?"), has written a first person investigative account covering information he dug up the past two years in Dallas, New Orleans, Miami, Mexico City, and Washington—much of which corroborates the HSCA Report.
3. Sylvia Meagher has compiled a complete subject/name index to the HSCA's Report, hearings, and appendices which is scheduled to be published this winter by Scarecrow Press, NYC. Professor Gary Owens of Huron College in Canada is assisting on the project.
4. G. Robert Blakey and former HSCA staffer Richard Billings are at work on an inside look at the HSCA investigation for New York Times Books (no publication date set).
5. David Lifton continues to toil in New York on his super-secret manuscript (title, subject and publisher are still classified by the author). He promises a 1980 release.



A FAREWELL

To the AIB Readership:

This is the last issue of *Clandestine America*. The AIB office is now closed, although Jeff Goldberg will remain in Washington in close touch with the JFK case as it develops through the Justice Department and for the immediate future will be available as usual for one on one phone consultations with anyone wanting an update and not calling collect. All mail and phone calls will be forwarded to him.

Subscribers to *Clandestine America* will be pleased to know that an arrangement has been made with the Covert Action Information Project of Washington and their bi-monthly publication on the CIA, *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, to fill, as best they can, the remaining paid subscriptions to *Clandestine America* (starting with their Jan./Feb. issue). We thank all of you for supporting the newsletter and generously coming through time and again when we asked for help.

We are not sure we are closing down the AIB for good. Maybe something will happen to make us think we have a role to play again in the development of this issue. But since the conclusion of the work of the Select Committee and the publication of its findings of probable conspiracy it has become difficult for us to specify a further set of concrete objectives that would justify the considerable expenses—personal as well as financial—that operating the organization has entailed.

When Bob Katz "founded" the AIB in 1972 he had no idea he was doing anything of the kind. A simple boy from the Midwest, he had come to the big city of Boston to be a young writer learning to make his way. He had good feet and a cutting jab, and soon began assisting Bob Saltzman of the Committee to Investigate Assassinations who was lecturing around the northeast showing what appeared to be photographic proof of conspiracy in the JFK killing. Saltzman's photographic material came from the archives of Richard E. Sprague, archivist and source to the slide showing world of the original, startling and sometimes sensation photographic evidence of Dallas: the allegedly fake Oswald photos, the magic bullet, the contradictory medical evidence, the Dealey Plaza tramps, the soldiers of fortune of the Bay of Pigs—all brought together in Sprague's vast photo collection from which was culled the original JFK lecture.

Katz grew fascinated, learned the material, and at last began giving the lecture himself. Soon Katz was getting more bookings than he could fill. He brought on his friends and fellow buffs, David Williams and Harvey Yazijian, as back-up lecturers.

From the activity and interest these three generated in the Hub, came a weekly radio show over WBUR, Boston University's FM station. The radio show needed a name, so the station's news director Vic Wheatman suggested Assassination Information Bureau. It stuck.

When I joined up in 1973, it was mainly to sharpen the AIB's political conception of the murder and to help the group start thinking less like a lecture bureau and more like a public information center with a political perspective on the case. When we needed to grow as an organization the right people always seemed to show up: Michael Gee and Jeff Gottlieb staffed the Cambridge office, Jim Kostman organized our research program, Jeff Cohen added depth to our investigative capabilities on the King case, Fred Webre helped us make the move from Cambridge to Washington, Marty Lee carried on important research on the CIA's mind-drug operations, Bob Ranftel played a key role on the FBI document reading project, and Jeff

Goldberg organized the Washington office and was in overall charge of the operation for the three years we were there.

We also enjoyed an especially intense and fruitful relationship on these issues with Paul Hoch, Peter Scott, and Sylvia Meagher.

In January 1975 at Boston University we sponsored a conference on the Politics of Conspiracy bringing together a host of important critics, announcing a political analysis of the case, declaring our intention to "build a movement" to reopen the case, and most important of all, from a media/political viewpoint, providing the first public view of the now famous Groden enhancements of the Zapruder film—enhancements which stealing a passage from "Blowup," the movie, proved to most eyes that the President must have been shot by at least two people. We shortly thereafter helped introduce to the Massachusetts State Legislature a resolution which was passed calling on the national Congress to reopen JFK.

In September 1976 the United States House finally acted and in HR 1540 established the House Select Committee on Assassinations. The committee got off to a miserable start, righted itself, conducted a \$5.6 million investigation over the course of 2½ years, and produced at the end a massive report which repudiated the Warren Commission theory of the lone-assassin, asserted that scientific evidence compelled the acceptance of the conspiracy theory, and identified elements of organized crime which its investigation had persuaded it might have been implicated in the assassination.

It is interesting now to look back and recall how many times we agitators for a new look at the case were condescendingly informed that we could not win. Especially the liberal media, who tried to preside over public opinion, told us we had no good arguments, that even if we did, we would never get Congress to reopen the case, and that even if Congress did reopen the case, they would find no conspiracy and would affirm the original Warren verdict. But the Congress did reopen the case and found a conspiracy. It gives you a little more room for faith in the system and a little less for faith in the media.

Now the case stands before the Justice Department, which is presumably ruminating on its alternative responses. Apparently the Department will try to confirm the scientific work first, (i.e., the acoustic analysis), then perhaps pick up certain investigative leads left with it by the committee.

There is little more that the AIB can do to effect this new situation. We feel that the effort we made to help bring the case this far was well worth it, that our close pursuit of the case and of the Select Committee made a difference, that it represents a contribution to the history of this issue, and that the outcome so far—the outcome at the committee level—could hardly have been more gratifying. We feel we made our main points, which was that any honest person who looks openmindedly at this body of evidence will conclude that there was a conspiracy in Dallas. That has been demonstrated now to the Congress. What unfolds beyond this is beyond our power as an organization to effect or as individuals to endure. And if the issue of JFK's death really does have a national constituency, then it will find its new AIB for the new period ahead.

We could not have carried out our work without the support of many people. But in particular we depended on a small handful of patrons who do not want to be named, but who know how deeply we thank them, and how vital they were to our work. We hope they are satisfied that their considerable investment in us was well placed. We also owe a deep gratitude to our colleagues in the case, and especially to Norman Mailer, who gave us invaluable spiritual support at a time we badly needed it.



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There may come another time, as noted above, for AIB to come back, reopen its files, dust off its address books, and crank up again. Just like in the comic books. That will depend on circumstances ahead of us. Those of us who created this thing and manned it in Cambridge and Washington are still in close touch with each other and our many friends. Time will have to tell. But for now, this is it. It was good.

Carl Oglesby,
for the AIB

P.S.—

The AIB was begun as an explicit effort to foster and mobilize a citizen's movement to confront the powers that be with one of the last questions they wanted to face: who killed President Kennedy? The reason the organization took the shape it did—public lectures, petition drives, teach-ins, as opposed to simply lobbying efforts in Washington—stemmed from our belief that a reinvestigation of the case could only be maneuvered by a broad-based public outcry that might ultimately capture the attention of recalcitrant representatives in Washington. We never believed then, nor do we now, that an act of conscience would lead the Congress to reopen the case. We tried to organize into a movement because we believed nothing short of that could have the desired effect.

Our sense of mission was based on the assumption that the revelations of criminal conspiracy which would inevitably flow from an honest assassination investigation would awaken the country like nothing before—not even Watergate—to the dire

need for major change at the highest levels of the federal government. Although the AIB never embraced any political ideology, we were, in this regard, radicals.

Each person who worked with us will come to his or her own evaluation of just what happened. Was it the public pressure, or the drive by the Black Caucus for a Martin Luther King probe, or the covert maneuverings of liberal Democrats, or some combination thereof that resulted in the HSCA investigation? My own feeling is that we toppled the first domino, and that our sometimes maniacal perseverance kept the board tilted towards Capitol Hill. There can be no doubt that it was our efforts that polarized the discussion to the point where the government either had to probe anew or cover-up anew.

Sad to say, the revelations of the HSCA, profound as they were, did not rock the government, did not provoke soul searching in the press, did not result in the widespread awakening one would expect from an official verification that clandestine forces murdered the President.

What actually muted the HSCA findings? Was it callousness on the part of the media, the apathy of the citizenry, the Select Committee's ambivalence, or our own inability to push the struggle to the next level of agitation? These are urgent questions, yet, in the strange aftermath of our experience, no one hurries for answers to them.

What I am sure of is that we helped to build a network of concerned individuals who possessed research, analytical, and promotional skills that were devoted to an unpopular, underdog cause. That we know your names, and you know ours, is no small resource as we move together into the future. May we be in touch.

Sincerely,
Bob Katz

DOUBLE ISSUE

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Assassination Information Bureau

1322 18th St. NW, Wash., DC 20036 (202) 857-0017

Sylvia Meagher
302 West 12th Street
New York, NY 10014



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